

*The California Deserts*. By EDMUND C. JAEGER. xii + 208 pp. Stanford University Press, 4th edition, 1965. \$4.95.

E. C. Jaeger's new edition of *The California Deserts* illuminates for the reader only a limited portion of the vast phenomena which occur in this extensive area of southeastern California. The book is primarily intended as a guide whose purpose is to acquaint the amateur naturalist or traveler with the general array of life in this region. It fulfills this function admirably as it includes chapters on history, climate, physiography, travel, preservation, and nearly all biological groups found in the desert including insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, aborigines, fungi, lichens, ferns, and higher vascular plants. However, the elucidation of each species is very short, which, as the author states has ". . . left it for the reader to detect where the nuggets lie ensconced." The new edition is essentially similar to the third except for several new photographs and the addition of chapters on aborigines and desert conservation.

Dr. Jaeger captures the very essence of the region with 16 magnificent plates and the simple statement that ". . . incoming rain clouds are generally for me the signal to start desertward. Let me have the delicious odors of the creosote bush and saltbush when they are wetted with gentle rains, look upon the endless variety and beauty of the clouds' far-flung forms, have the silence of the uninhabited mesas, and I am in a land enchanted."

For a person not acquainted with the desert this book offers an opportunity to learn some of the interesting salient features about the more common plant and animal inhabitants. The descriptions and drawings of the organisms, although sufficient for the uninitiated, are for the most part inadequate to provide exact identification. At times these become more of a check-list of species and their habitats leaving the reader with a crying desire for more information. Dr. Jaeger also describes many marvelous adaptations for survival in a desert environment and endows the reader with an appreciation for the country and its inhabitants.

Unfortunately, the desert region is rapidly being depleted as the heavily populated areas of California expand. Dr. Jaeger cites several examples of this encroachment and states: "Most unfortunate it is that, perhaps more than any portion of our land heritage, our deserts are thought by many as the most expendable lands we possess, mere wastelands that should if possible be utilized for gain. Even for many 'conservationists', conservation means only efficient exploitation of the land, getting everything possible out of it while perpetuating enough of what is left to serve as 'seed' for successive exploitations. . . . They would completely make over nature, leaving the 'man-did-it-look' upon almost every part of it."

Dr. Jaeger has combined his sensitive appreciation for the desert with his vast knowledge and has produced a well-written, pleasant book, which will be enjoyable reading for anyone interested in this region.—ROBERT M. LLOYD, Department of Botany, University of California, Berkeley.

## NOTES AND NEWS

NOTES ON SOME GRASSES OF THE PACIFIC COAST. — *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (Huds.) Beauv. was discovered growing in large colonies and apparently thoroughly naturalized at two localities in Benton Co., Oregon. This common woodland grass of Europe, Asia, and North Africa has been mentioned as introduced into North America for cultivation in ornamental grass gardens (Hitchcock, *Man. Grasses U. S.*, ed. 2, 57, 1950; Weintraub, *U. S. Dept. Agri. Handb.* 58:16. 1953). However, it has not previously been reported as well established in nature, at least on the Pacific Coast. At the Benton Co. sites, it grows in partial shade at the edges of woods, associated mainly with *Acer macrophyllum* and *Quercus garryana*. The following collections will be deposited at the Oregon State University herbarium (OSC): *John Mellott*